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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the development of an adventure therapy qualification, the Certificate in Social Work (Activity Based), at Waiariki Polytechnic, New Zealand. New Zealand has an extensive range of outdoor opportunities, and a large percentage of the population is involved in outdoor activities. Although many therapeutic programs involve young people in the outdoors, few programs have both skilled outdoor instructors and skilled therapists. The Certificate aims to give social work students a basic understanding of adventure therapy. Students who pursue further training will then become either social workers who refer clients to adventure programs or facilitators within such programs. Either way, they will have knowledge about the effective use of the outdoors for at-risk young people in New Zealand. The 1-year curriculum contains 8 required training modules and 12 optional modules, of which the student chooses 5. Since the indigenous Maori people are overrepresented in criminal convictions, poor health status, and welfare involvement, an important element of the program is its emphasis on biculturalism. Maori cultural values and customs are taught and supported in the classroom. In addition, the adventure approach connects well with Maori traditional ways of working and learning. Examples are given of adventure activities related to Maori culture and history. (Contains 11 references.) (SV)

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The Development of a New Zealand Tertiary Qualification in Adventure Based Social Work

By Blair Gilbert

"Must we always teach our children with books? Let them look at the mountains and the stars up above. Let them look at the beauty of the waters and the trees and flowers on earth. They will then begin to think, and to think is the beginning of a real education" (David Polis cited in Outward Bound, 1989, p.23). This whakatauki (proverb) was given at the inaugural graduation of the Certificate in Social Work (Activity Based) 1995, Rotorua, New Zealand. In this paper I will share the experiences of developing an adventure therapy qualification, the Certificate in Social Work (Activity Based), at a New Zealand Polytechnic. I will outline the origins of the course, how the course operates and the context in which it exists including the bicultural framework in which it is set.

There are three reasons why Waiariki Polytechnic chose to develop a tertiary qualification in Adventure Based Social Work. First and most importantly, the adventure approach to therapy is effective. Research and anecdotal evidence from those working in the field has shown positive outcomes. One example is Schoel et al (1988) which studied Adventure Based Counselling groups ranging from elementary to high school students, the findings state:

> According to the Tennessee (self-concept scale), significant improvements were made in self confidence, identity, self satisfaction, behaviour, physical self, moral-ethical self, personal self, family self and social self. The "empirical scales" of the Tennessee...show significant improvements in adjustment, psychosis, personality disorder, neurosis, and personality integration scales and a decrease in deviant signs. (Schoel et al, 1988, p.278)

The adventure based approach grew initially from work with young people, both from the early beginnings of Outward Bound seeking to increase the survival skills of young sailors (Outward Bound, 1989) to Project Adventure taking it into the schools (Schoel et al, 1988). In recent years, the application of adventure based processes has continued to develop a following in the youth field, and in relation to personal growth and development, and has expanded into areas such as psychiatric, addictions, organisational

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development and community development. Derrick (1993) tells us that, "Experience together with reflection and action remain the best teachers of all and encompass the basic principles of community and social work" (p.11).

Knowing how effective adventure therapy is, and that it is a relevant process for social work practice, it makes sense to widen the range of fields in which adventure-based processes are an accepted and appropriately used method of practice. For adventure therapy to become integrated into the field of community and social work, we need to train social service workers to be accomplished in the theory and application of adventure therapy.

Secondly, an impetus was given to developing an adventure therapy-training programme because of my own keen interest and experience in the field. One part of this experience saw my involvement with a research project commissioned by the N.Z. Department of Internal Affairs which used a qualitative research methodology to define the outcomes of an activity-based programme for a group of 9 - 11 year olds. The findings indicated an overall positive outcome in terms of attitude towards school and schoolwork, attitude at home, benefits to the caregivers, participation in community groups, and the self-growth of the participants (Burne et al., 1990). With this and an employment history involving the adventure approach my motivation was strong to establish such a course.

Thirdly, there was an awareness that social service agencies refer young "at risk" people to adventure based programmes with limited knowledge of the programmes therapeutic processes. In New Zealand there exists an extensive range of outdoor opportunities. New Zealand is a long, narrow, mountainous country surrounded by a large expanse of ocean. It has a vast network of rivers and 8 million hectares - nearly 30 percent of the nations total area is classified as National Park (NZ Yearbook, 1996). The land mass of New Zealand is similar to Japan (270 500 sq.km.) but the population is vastly different. New Zealand has 3.6 million people compared to Japan's almost 130 million population. This creates an idyllic environment for outdoor experiences and this equates to a high number of the population being involved in the outdoors.

It also means that many programmes developed for young people involve them in the outdoors, this includes therapeutic programmes. In my experience the therapeutic youth programmes that operate have skilled outdoor instructors and some have skilled therapists. The effective combination of these two approaches is not often found. The value is seen to be in the experience and involvement with the outdoors rather than a therapeutic process. I believe the lack of knowledge about adventure therapy limits the possible outcomes of these programmes and may even lead to negative outcomes. Ryan and Johnson (1972) found in one American study involving same-gender groups:

> An increase in depression, hostility, and anxiety among girls upon their return to hospital. Boys, on the other hand, showed decreased depression, hostility, and anxiety mid-way during the trip, but somewhat increased depression and hostility upon their return to the hospital. (Levitt 1994 cited in Cole et al, 1994, p.131)

It is in no way a given that an outdoor experience is a positive or therapeutic experience. I believe many referring agencies have limited knowledge of the adventure therapy area, which could lead to inadequate and perhaps inappropriate referrals to outdoor programmes.

It is the intention of the Certificate in Social Work (Activity Based) to give social work students a basis of understanding in adventure therapy. From this certificate students will go on to higher level's of training and will either become social workers who refer clients to programmes or in practice as facilitator's of adventure based programmes. Either way they will have some in-depth knowledge about the effective use of the outdoors for young "at risk" people in New Zealand.

How it came to be

In outlining how this qualification came to be developed, it is important to place it in context with the political climate, which existed when the course was established. During the 1990s, there has been a steady increase in the cost of fees for students enrolling in tertiary institutions and an increasing imperative for tertiary institutions to make a profit. The State Owned Enterprises Act 1987 and the Finance Act 1991 moved New Zealand rapidly from a welfare state to a residualist user pays administration. Large-scale restructuring has been a feature of many educational institutions through this period, and an increasing importance has been placed on profitability over educational outcomes. Course programmes that do not run profitably are unlikely to survive, and there is continuing pressure for existing programmes to find creative ways of staying both financially viable and educationally sound. Out of the rubble of this difficult, insecure environment, the Certificate in Social Work (Activity Based) was born in 1995.

A Certificate in Community and Social Work had been in existence at Waiariki Polytechnic for a number of years, in a department providing a range of social science programmes. I had been involved in the certificate programme as a lecturer for two years, and had been incorporating adventure-based elements into the programme wherever possible. Staff had discussed the possibility of developing a programme that focused more fully on the adventure approach on a number of occasions. As the department felt increased pressure to run at a profit without downsizing, we saw an opportunity to develop a new programme that could `piggy back' with our existing programmes. This would bring in a number of additional students with a relatively low increase in the operating costs normally associated with establishing a certificate level programme.

Pure opportunism - but in a good cause.

The possible courses within Waiariki Polytechnic that it could "piggy back" on included: Community and Social Work, Disability Studies, Sports and Leisure, Health Studies, Maori Studies and Adventure Tourism. This obviously had an effect on the curriculum and what would and would not be included in such a qualification. This piggy backing concept would see the activity-based students sitting in on existing classes within a number of different departments. Similar to a first year university lecture which may have a range of students from various faculties.

The final reality saw a limited amount of "piggy backing" possible due to the institutions structure. This meant the cross servicing was predominantly with Community and Social Work, and Disability Studies as these where within the same department. Other areas of teaching were contracted in from local organisations such as "Te Waiariki Purea Trust" who offer outdoor experiences for young people, and national organisations including "Project Adventure New Zealand."

The piggy backing idea is how we gave this programme life, but it is rapidly outgrowing its existing environment. For example, class sizes are becoming unwieldy as the activity-based group has grown from 9 students in 1995 to 16 students in 1997 with an

additional waiting list. On their own the size is manageable but when they combine (piggy back) with the other classes, numbers are often around 40. In comparison to University lectures this may not seem large, however Polytechnics pride themselves on small class sizes and our delivery style tends to be facilitative, making use of participative teaching methods. Other issues which have become problematic are budgetary restraints, which can limit the activities chosen and resource people who could be contracted and limited flexibility in curriculum development and the future development of the qualification.

This raises the question, with the course now in its third year, about where to from here? Some suggestions, which are currently being discussed, are the development of a Diploma or Post Graduate Diploma in adventure therapy.

The Curriculum

The Certificate in Social Work (Activity Based) is classified as an "A" level social work qualification (as set by the New Zealand Council of Education and Training in Social Services, NZCETSS). To meet the requirements of an "A" level social work qualification eight core modules must be included these are:

- Treaty of Waitangi
- Human Development
- Aotearoa/New Zealand Social and Political History
- Personal Development
- Ethics and Ethical Practice
- Marginalised Groups
- Fields of Practice
- Practical Placement
- (a module equates to a 30 hour duration teaching unit, with the exception of Personal Development being 60 hours and Practical Placement being 150 hours)

To complete a full-time one-year certificate a minimum of five additional modules are required. These should relate to the field of social work while giving it a particular focus or "major" of your choice - we choose a further eight modules and determined these to be:

- Work Methods
- Personal Management
- Introduction to Programme Design and Development
- Programme Design and Development for Specific Needs
- Trip Planning and Management
- Ropes and Rocks
- Water Based Activities
- First Aid

We also include within the social science programmes four additional modules entitled:

- Adventure Based Social Work
- Nga Mea Maori
- Placement Preparation
- Placement Presentations.

Over the certificate's two years of existence these modules have evolved and developed. The current program lasts 33 weeks over a one full academic year. The 1997 curriculum is classified under the paper titles defined by Victoria University Social Work Department as:

Social Policy: Treaty of Waitangi, Aotearoa Social & Political History
Principles & Practices: Human Development, Fields of Practice, Work Methods, Ethics & Ethical Practice, Adventure Based Social Work
Applied Sociology: Marginalised Groups, Nga Mea Maori
Practicum: Personal Development, Personal Management, Placement, Placement Report
Activity Based: Programme Design and Development for Specific Needs, Facilitation of Adventure Based Programmes, Trip Planning and Risk Management, Ropes and Rocks, Water Based Activities, Outdoor First Aid

The level of this qualification is introductory to the field of Social Work. Most enrolling students have no other tertiary qualifications and may not have had any recent experience in academic study. This level of training expects that graduates will continue their training before becoming Social Work practitioners or other social service professionals. In New Zealand Social Workers are expected to hold a minimum "B" level qualification (as set by NZCETSS), this equates to a Bachelors Degree in Social Work or Masters in Social Work (applied).

I believe the Certificate in Social Work (Activity Based) provides students with a level of knowledge in the adventure based social work field from which they can make choices as to their future training path. It also provides for those students who are involved in some level of social service work with introductory skills, understanding and knowledge in the work they are undertaking. As more graduates come through the certificate course with a keen interest to train in the adventure therapy field, again the question is asked, what steps could or should we be taking within the Polytechnic and within New Zealand to develop higher level qualifications?

Bicultural Framework

An issue, which impacts on the Certificate in Social Work (Activity Based), is that of "biculturism." I would therefore like to briefly discuss the background of this area of the program. Biculturalism is an area that New Zealand has had to address in a very real and direct fashion.

The Treaty of Waitangi is the cornerstone of biculturism in New Zealand. The Treaty was signed in 1840 by William Hobson representing the British Crown, and over 500 Maori chiefs representing the indigenous people of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

In the years following the signing, great injustices occurred largely on the part of the Crown, aimed at colonising the indigenous Maori people. This lead to the near

destruction of Maori language, customs and treasures, which were, guaranteed protection under the Treaty. Colonisation and its negative impact are not an issue unique to New Zealand. Oraange (1987) has stated, "In many respects New Zealand, in spite of the Treaty, has been merely a variation in the pattern of colonial domination of indigenous races" (p. 5).

During the 1970s the New Zealand Government began to recognise the Treaty and the injustices that had occurred. The Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975 formally acknowledged this. The honouring of the Treaty in day to day situations is often challenging; biculturalism is seen as one way of honouring the Treaty. The prominence of the Treaty as a contemporary issue in New Zealand society today is evident in recent controversial words by a Member of Parliament, Tariana Turia,

> The Treaty of Waitangi is far more important to this land than the Magna Carta, the UN Charter, or even the Ten Commandments. The Treaty was the nation's founding document, which made New Zealand unique because it originates from this land, and the people who belong here. (Daily Post, 1997, p. 3)

This places the Treaty as a key issue for all areas of society, and directly relevant to education and social work.

The effects of colonisation are evident in the over representation of the indigenous people in negative social well-being indicators, such as criminal convictions, poor health status and welfare involvement. The Oxford Dictionary (1990) defines Social Work as, "work of benefit to those in need of help or welfare." Given that there are indications that the indigenous people are "in need of help or welfare" this has implications for the training and education of social workers.

Relating social work to adventure therapy, defining therapy as, "contributing to general well-being, esp. mental well-being of people" (Oxford, 1990), I believe there are implications for the role and expectations of adventure therapists in working with indigenous people. I see this as an exciting challenge for the field, as it has been for the Certificate in Social Work (Activity Based) which, despite some good intentions, operates in a monocultural institution, which is governed by a monocultural political system within a monocultural society.

Waiariki Polytechnic has chosen to address the issues in the Treaty of Waitangi by stating a goal of providing a bicultural education to all students. The Polytechnic's mission statement reads: "Waiariki Polytechnic leading the way in innovative, quality education, provided within a bicultural framework and developed in partnership with community" (Waiariki Polytechnic Mission Statement, 1991). In the classroom this equates to teaching and supporting cultural values and customs. Fortunately the adventure approach connects almost completely with Maori traditional ways of working and learning. Some examples are:

- Maori people tend towards a holistic approach to education.
- Learning in groups is favoured over individuals working on their own.
- Knowledge belongs to the group, and is to be used in the service of the group.
- Knowledge is pooled and things worked out in group discussion.
- Maori adults tend not to prepare learners for problems beforehand, they prefer to stress the positive side of things, and leave learners to make their own mistakes.

- Much significant Maori teaching occurs ad hoc, as and when the need arises.
- Learners are encouraged to learn by doing. (Whakamana Tanga, 1996, p.83).

It appears that many of these group-based traditions are typical of a number of indigenous cultures in the world. (Dixon, 1995). These connections provide opportunity within a course programme to select adventures that meet adventure therapy goals within a context of cultural meaningfulness.

One example from the Certificate in Social Work (Activity Based) is the adventure selected for the water-based module. The students went on a 4-day canoe journey down the Whanganui river guided by the Tangata Whenua (Maori people of that area). The Tangata Whenua have been working proactively to reclaim the river which was wrongly taken by the Crown. Along the river the students stayed at occupation sites, which have been reclaimed as ancestral lands. The many rituals and protocols of the Maori world were embarked upon. The students also became fully immersed in the current issues of social justice while tackling white water challenges in a place of spiritual significance and majestic scenery.

Their experiences and learnings from the Tangata Whenua lead them to explore their own role in terms of biculturalism. They began to conceptualise the words from Paulo Freire: "Washing ones hands of a conflict between the powerful and powerless means to side with the powerful not to be neutral" (Freire, 1996).

Another Adventure saw the 1996 graduating students retrace the steps of a respected Maori explorer and ancestor "Ihenga." The Waiariki Polytechnic's ancestral house takes the name of Ihenga and these students were the first to graduate from this house of cultural significance. The students ran in relay from the landing site of the Te Arawa waka (ancestral canoe which bought them to Aotearoa/New Zealand), retracing the steps of Ihenga to the recently opened house where they then graduated. This journey bought an added cultural significance to the graduation.

Bicultural practice has many levels and the journey to creating a truly bicultural qualification is a long and complex one. The certificate begins to address some of these areas and it will continue to develop towards the gaol of honouring the Treaty of Waitangi. I believe the opportunities for "indigenous based adventure therapy" (for want of a better phrase) has exciting potential. With indigenous people having strong connections to the land and environment and a group oriented social structure, this area certainly warrants further development.

To conclude, I hope I have conveyed in this paper that the development of this qualification has been a challenging and rewarding experience. I also hope that the sharing of our experiences may be of assistance to others contemplating the development of such a programme. I eagerly look forward to future opportunities to work with others in developing qualifications that will help us meet the goals of enabling adventure therapy to become an accepted and appropriately used approach in the social services field.

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